Dōjinshi

Dōjinshi (同人誌, often transliterated *doujinshi*) is the Japanese term for self-published works, usually magazines, manga or novels. *Dōjinshi* are often the work of amateurs, though some professional artists participate as a way to publish material outside the regular industry. *Dōjinshi* are part of a wider category of *dōjin* including art collections, anime and games. Groups of *dōjinshi* artists refer to themselves as a *sākuru* (サークル, circle). A number of such groups actually consist of a single artist: they are sometimes called *kojin sākuru* (個人サークル, personal circles).

Since the 1980s, the main method of distribution has been through regular *dōjinshi* conventions, the largest of which is called Comiket (short for "Comic Market") held in the summer and winter in Tokyo's Big Sight. At the convention, over 20 acres (81,000 m^2) of *dōjinshi* are bought, sold, and traded by attendees. *Dōjinshi* creators who base their materials on other creators' works normally publish in small numbers to maintain a low profile so as to protect themselves against litigation. This makes a talented creator's or circle's *dōjinshi* a coveted commodity as only the fast or the lucky will be able to get them before they sell out.

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Etymology

The term *dōjinshi* is derived from *dōjin* (同人, literally "same person", used to refer to a person or people with whom one shares a common goal or interest) and *shi* (誌, a suffix generally meaning "periodical publication").

History

The pioneer among *dōjinshi* was *Meiroku Zasshi* (明六雑誌), published in the early Meiji period (since 1874). Not a literary magazine in fact, *Meiroku Zasshi* nevertheless played a big role in spreading the idea of *dōjinshi*. The first magazine to publish *dōjinshi* novels was *Garakuta Bunko* (我楽多文庫), founded in 1885 by writers Ozaki Kōyō and Yamada Bimyo.[1] *Dōjinshi* publication reached its peak in the early Shōwa period, and *dōjinshi* became a mouthpiece for the creative youth of that time.

Created and distributed in small circles of authors or close friends, *dōjinshi* contributed significantly to the emergence and development of the *shishōsetsu* genre. During the postwar years, *dōjinshi* gradually decreased in importance as outlets for different literary schools and new authors. Their role was taken over by literary journals such as *Gunzo*, *Bungakukai* and others. One notable exception was *Bungei Shuto* (文芸首都, lit. *Literary Capital*), which was published from 1933 until 1969. Few *dōjinshi* magazines survived with the help of official literary journals. *Haiku* and *tanka* magazines are still published today.

It has been suggested that technological advances in the field of photocopying during the 1970s contributed to an increase in publishing *dōjinshi*. During this time, manga editors were encouraging manga authors to appeal to a mass market, which may have also contributed to an increase in the popularity of writing *dōjinshi*.[2]

During the 1980s, the content of *dōjinshi* shifted from being predominantly original content to being mostly parodic of existing series.[3] Often called *aniparo*, this was often an excuse to feature certain characters in romantic relationships. Male authors focused on series like *Urusei Yatsura*, and female authors focused on series like *Captain Tsubasa*.[2] This coincided with the rise in popularity of Comiket, the first event dedicated specifically to the distribution of *dōjinshi*, which had been founded in 1975.

As of February 1991, there were some *dōjinshi* creators who sold their work through supportive comic book stores. This practice came to light when three managers of such shops were arrested for having a *lolicon dōjinshi* for sale.[4]

Over the last decade, the practice of creating *dōjinshi* has expanded significantly, attracting thousands of creators and fans alike. Advances in personal publishing technology have also fueled this expansion by making it easier for *dōjinshi* creators to write, draw, promote, publish, and distribute their works. For example, some *dōjinshi* are now published on digital media. Furthermore, many *dōjinshi* creators are moving to online download and print-on-demand services, while others are beginning to distribute their works through American channels such as anime shop websites and specialized online direct distribution sites. In 2008, a white paper on the otaku industry was published, this estimated that gross revenue from sales of *dōjinshi* in 2007 were 27.73 billion yen, or 14.9% of total otaku expenditure on their hobby.[5]

Symbol of the Doujin Mark License

To avoid legal problems, the *dōjin* mark (同人マーク) was created. A license format inspired by Creative Commons licenses,[6] the first author to authorize the license was Ken Akamatsu in the manga *UQ Holder!*, released in August 28, 2013 in the magazine *Weekly Shōnen Magazine*.[7]

Perception

John Oppliger of AnimeNation stated that creating *dōjinshi* is largely popular with Japanese fans, but not with Western fans. Oppliger claimed that because Japanese natives grow up with anime and manga "as a constant companion", Japanese fans "are more intuitively inclined" to create or expand on existing manga and anime in the form of *dōjinshi*.[8] Since Western fans experience a "more purely" visual experience as most Western fans cannot understand the Japanese language, the original language of most anime, and are "encouraged by social pressure to grow out of cartoons and comics during the onset of adolescence", most of them usually participate in utilizing and rearranging existing work into anime music videos.[9]

In most Western cultures, *dōjinshi* is often perceived to be derivative of existing work, analogous to fan fiction and almost completely pornographic. This is partly true: *dōjinshi* are often, though not always, parodies or alternative storylines involving the worlds of popular manga, game or anime series, and can often feature overtly sexual material. However, there are also many non sexually explicit *dōjinshi* being created as well. The Touhou Project series for example, is known to be notable for the large amount of *dōjinshi* being produced for it that are not pornographic in nature.[10][11] Some groups releasing adults-only themed materials during the annual Touhou only event Reitaisai in 2008 were only estimated at roughly 10%.[11]

Categories

Like their mainstream counterparts, *dōjinshi* are published in a variety of genres and types. However, due to the target audience, certain themes are more prevalent, and there are a few major division points by which the publications can be classified. It can be broadly divided into original works and *aniparo*—works which parody existing anime and manga franchises.[12]

As in fanfics, a very popular theme to explore is non-canonical pairings of characters in a given show (for *dōjinshi* based on mainstream publications). Many such publications contain *yaoi* or *yuri* (hentai involving two or more males resp. females) motives, either as a part of non-canon pairings, or as a more direct statement of what can be hinted by the main show.

Another category of *dōjinshi* is furry or *kemono*, often depicting homosexual male pairings of anthropomorphic animal characters and, less often, lesbian pairings. Furry *dōjinshi* shares some characteristics with the *yaoi* and *yuri* genres, with many furry *dōjinshi* depicting characters in erotic settings or circumstances, or incorporating elements typical of anime and manga, such as exaggerated drawings of eyes or facial expressions.

Many *dōjinshi-ka* (*dōjinshi* authors) attempt to emulate the visual format of mainstream manga publications.

A major part of *dōjinshi*, whether based on mainstream publications or original, contains sexually explicit material, due to both the large demand for such publications and absence of restrictions official publishing houses have to follow. Indeed, often the main point of a given *dōjinshi* is to present an explicit version of a popular show's characters. Such works may be known to English speakers as "*H-dōjinshi*", in line with the former Japanese use of letter H to denote erotic material. The Japanese usage, however, has since moved towards the word *ero*,[13] and so *ero manga* (エロ漫画) is the term almost exclusively used to mark *dōjinshi* with adult themes. Sometimes they will also be termed "for adults" (成人向け *seijin muke*) or *18-kin* (18禁) (an abbreviation of "forbidden to minors less than 18 years of age" (18歳未満禁止 *18-sai-miman kinshi*)). To differentiate, *ippan* (一般, , "general", from the general public it is suitable for) is the term used for publications absent of such content.

Most *dōjinshi* are commercially bound and published by *dōjinshi-ka* (dōjinshi authors) who self-publish through various printing services. Copybooks, however, are self-made using xerox machines or other copying methods. Few are copied by drawing by hand.

Not all category terms used by English-language fans of *dōjinshi* are derived from Japanese. For example, an *AU dōjinshi* is one set in an alternate universe.[14]

Comiket

Comiket is the world's largest comic convention. It is held twice a year (summer and winter) in Tokyo, Japan. The first CM was held in December 1975, with only about 32 participating circles and an estimated 600 attendees. About 80% of these were female, but male participation in Comiket increased later.[3] In 1982, there were fewer than 10,000 attendees, this increased to over 100,000 attendees as of 1989, and over half a million people in recent years.[15] . This rapid increase in attendance enabled *dōjinshi* authors to sell thousands of copies of their works, earning a fair amount of money with their hobby.[16] In 2009, Meiji University opened a *dōjin* manga library, named “Yoshihiro Yonezawa Memorial Library” to honour its alumni in its Surugadai campus. It contains Yonezawa's own *dōjinshi* collection, comprising 4137 boxes, and the collection of Tsuguo Iwata, another famous person in the sphere of *dōjinshi*.[17]

Copyright issues

Many *dōjinshi* are derivative works and *dōjinshi* artists rarely secure the permission of the original creator, a practice that has existed since the early 1980's,[18] despite being a direct violation of Japanese copyright law. Copyright holders take an unofficial policy of non-enforcement towards the *dōjinshi* market, due to it having beneficial impact on the commercial manga market, as well, by creating an avenue for aspiring manga artists to practice,[19] and talented *dōjinshi* creators are contacted by publishers.[20] Mehra, a law professor at Temple University, hypothesizes that because *dōjinshi* market actually causes the manga market to be more productive, and that strict enforcement of copyright law would cause the industry to suffer.[19]

There are two notable instances of legal action over *dōjinshi*. In 1999, the author of an erotic Pokémon manga was prosecuted by Nintendo. This created a media furor as well as an academic analysis in Japan of the copyright issues around *dōjinshi*. At this time, the legal analysis seemed to conclude that *dōjinshi* should be overlooked because they are produced by amateurs for one-day events and not sold in the commercial market.[21] In 2006, an artist selling an imagined "final chapter" for the series *Doraemon*, which was never completed, was given a warning by the estate of author Fujiko F. Fujio. His creation apparently looked confusingly similar to a real Doraemon manga. He ceased distribution of his *dōjinshi* and sent compensation to the publisher voluntarily. The publisher noted at this time that *dōjinshi* were not usually a cause of concern for him. The Yomiuri Shinbun noted, "Fanzines don't usually cause many problems as long as they are sold only at one-day exhibitions," but quoted an expert saying that due to their increasing popularity a copyright system should be set up.[22]

Notable artists

Individuals

- Yoshitoshi Abe has published some of his original works as *dōjinshi*, such as *Haibane Renmei*. He cited the reason as, essentially, not wanting to answer to anyone about his work, especially because he saw it as so open ended.
- Ken Akamatsu, creator of manga such as *Love Hina* and *Negima*, continues to make *dōjinshi* which he sells at Comiket under the pen-name Awa Mizuno.
- Kiyohiko Azuma, creator of *Azumanga Daioh* and *Yotsuba&* started out doing *dōjinshi* using the pen-name A-Zone.[23]
- Nanae Chrono, creator of the manga *Peacemaker Kurogane*, has published multiple *Naruto dōjinshi*, most of a *yaoi* nature.
- Kazushi Hagiwara, creator of *Bastard!!*, and his group *Studio Loud in School* have published popular *Bastard!!*-related *dōjinshi* such as *Wonderful Megadeth!*, as well as various Capcom-related *dōjinshi*.
- Masaki Kajishima, creator of *Tenchi Muyo! Ryo-Ohki*, has long used the *dōjinshi* format to produce additional information about the series he has created, primarily *Tenchi Muyo! Ryo-Ohki* and *Tenchi Muyo! GXP*. These *dōjinshi* can either be completely filled with his work, or he will contribute a work to the *dōjinshi* title. Kajishima's *dōjinshi* works break down into one (or more) types of works: manga-style (where he illustrates a new story, usually with limited text), interviews, early drafts of scripts for the series (giving fans great insight into the creative process), storyboards drawn by Kajishima that ultimately were not animated, story notes (or short stories) giving further little details of various characters, situations, or places in Kajishima's World of Tenchi. As of this writing, Kajishima does two *dōjinshi* titles a year under the circle names "Kajishima Onsen" and "Kamidake Onsen". He has also used these to communicate with fans about his current projects, namely the *Saint Knight's Tale* spinoff anime featuring Tenchi's half-brother and the *GXP* novels.
- Kazuhiko Katō, also known as Monkey Punch, creator of *Lupin III* began as a *dōjinshi* artist.
- Kodaka Kazuma, creator of Kizuna, Rotten Teacher's Equation (Kusatta Kyōshi no Hōteishiki), Love Equation (Renai Hōteishiki) and Border among others, has published several parody *yaoi dōjinshi* as K2 Company of *Prince of Tennis*, *Fullmetal Alchemist*, and *Tiger and Bunny*, as well as an original *dōjinshi* series called 'Hana to Ryuu' (Flower and Dragon).
- Rikdo Koshi, creator of the manga *Excel Saga*, originally started out as a *dōjinshi* artist.
- Yun Kouga, a longtime published manga artist and creator of two well-known BL series, *Earthian* and *Loveless* has published *dōjinshi* for series such as *Gundam Wing* and *Tiger and Bunny*.
- Sanami Matoh, creator of FAKE, has published parody *yaoi dōjinshi* (mostly of *One Piece*) and original *dōjinshi* as East End Club.
- Maki Murakami, creator of *Gravitation* and *Gamers' Heaven*. Her circle Crocodile Ave. created *Remix Gravitation* AKA *Rimigra* and *Megamix Gravitation*, which were extremely sexually graphic.[24]

- Minami Ozaki, creator of the boy's love manga *Zetsuai*, is an extremely prolific *dōjinshi* creator. She authored numerous *yaoi dōjinshi* before her debut as a professional artist, most notably featuring characters from the soccer manga *Captain Tsubasa*. The main characters of her manga *Zetsuai* strongly resemble the main characters of her *Captain Tsubasa dōjinshi*. Ozaki continued to release *dōjinshi* about her own professional manga, often including sexual content that could not be published in Margaret, the young girls-oriented manga magazine in which *Zetsuai* was serialized.
- Yukiru Sugisaki, creator of *D.N.Angel* and *The Candidate for Goddess*, started as a *dōjinka*. She released *dōjinshi* about *King of Fighters*, *Evangelion*, etc.; all were gag *dōjinshi*.
- Rumiko Takahashi, creator of *Ranma ½* and *Inuyasha*, made *dōjinshi* before she became a professional artist.
- Yoshihiro Togashi, creator of *YuYu Hakusho* and *Hunter x Hunter*, has authored *dōjinshi* such as *Church!*.
- Hajime Ueda, the creator of *Q•Ko-chan* and the comic adaptation of *FLCL*.
- Nobuteru Yūki sells *dōjinshi* based on his animated works under his pen-name "The Man in the High Castle".
- Kana Ueda, creator of Nanoha Strikers *futanari dōjin*. Girl lovers several as Teana Lanster, Subaru Nakajima, Signum, Yagami Hayate and more.
- Yana Toboso used to be a *yaoi dōjinka* before she authored *Kuroshitsuji*, which explained why there are some notable BL hints throughout the series.
- Sunao Minakata, the illustrator of *Akuma no Riddle* is a regular *dōjinka*, especially in girls' love theme. Usually makes Touhou *dōjinshi* and has collaborated with other known-for-Touhou-works-popular artists, such as Banpai Akira.

Online

- Bleedman, creator of the online *Powerpuff Girls Doujinshi*, *Grim Tales From Down Below*, and *Sugar Bits*.
- Fred Gallagher, creator of the *Megatokyo* series, as well as the in-development series *Warmth*. His *Megatokyo* co-creator and former writer, Rodney "Largo" Caston, can also be considered one, though Caston has since left the business.
- Daniel Kim, creator of the Cardcaptor Sakura parody *Tomoyo42's Room*, has written and illustrated several *dōjinshi*, all of which are hosted at the Clone Manga (http://manga.clone-army.org/) collective.
- Jesús García Ferrer (Jesulink) created *Raruto*, a Spanish *Naruto dōjinshi* published online.
- Fabio Yabu produced the sentai spoof *Combo Rangers*.
- Kittyhawk, creator of *Sparkling Generation Valkyrie Yuuki*.

Circles

- 07th Expansion, creators of both Higurashi no Naku Koro ni and Umineko no Naku Koro ni.
- Clamp started out as a *dōjinshi* group of 11 known as Clamp Cluster.

See also

- *Dōjin*
- *Dōjin* music
- *Dōjin soft*
- Niigata Comic Market

Related concepts

- Amateur press association
- Fanzine
- Fan fiction
- Minicomic
- Self publishing

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External links

- Passion (http://www.witch-hunter.net/passion/): Popular *dōjinshi* fanlisting site
- Doujinshi DB (http://www.doujinshi.org/): Huge user-submitted database of *dōjinshi* artists, circles, and books, including name translations
- Nippon Fanifesto! A Tribute to DIY Manga (http://schulzlibrary.wordpress.com/2010/05/18/nippon-fanifesto-a-tribute-to-diy-manga/)—an illustrated essay explaining *dōjinshi* and their diversity

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